



Thomas & Jeanne Elmezzi Foundation
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Project 1•2•6 of the Thomas & Jeanne Elmezzi Foundation

About Project 1•2•6

Led by the Thomas & Jeanne Elmezzi Foundation, Project 1•2•6 is a community development initiative that works alongside community residents and leaders in three Long Island City/Astoria zip codes with the greatest social and economic needs. The Foundation identified these zip codes as 11101, 11102, and 11106—hence, Project 1•2•6.

The primary focus of the community development initiative is youth and how their families and communities affect their development. The Elmezzi Foundation understands that enhancing the quality of life for youth and their families in Long Island City/Astoria requires a long-term commitment, which is why the Elmezzi Foundation plans to support the community over a period that spans generations.

Project 1•2•6 has Three Major Objectives

- To ensure sufficient access to resources and services, so that community residents are empowered to achieve their full potential.
- To increase opportunities for residents' civic engagement and leadership development, as it is necessary for sustainable community development.
- To strengthen and connect community groups through a forum that ensures all community stakeholders agree upon priorities for the community's development.

Our Long-Term Commitment

For the 105,000 residents of 1-2-6, 22,000 of whom are children, we envision:

- **For each child**, from birth to adulthood, an environment that is safe, stimulating, educational, character-building, and opportunity-rich.
- **For the entire community**, an environment that supports strong families, cooperation, safety and security, economic development, cultural preservation, and civic participation.

Strategy for Implementation

The Project 1•2•6 strategy for implementation includes: forming an accurate snapshot of the community, building an active network of community residents and leaders, and empowering the community to make funding recommendations.



Snapshot. We will create a “snapshot” of the community to identify its needs, priorities, and assets. The final product will be the result of collaborative community research and will reflect the information gathered from a sample population of residents (youth, adults, and elderly), non-profit leaders, and other LIC/Astoria stakeholders. Focus groups, surveys, data analysis, asset mapping, and other research tools and methods will be used.



Network. We will facilitate the building of a pro-active volunteer network to meet the needs of local organizations, such as food banks, health clinics, libraries, and youth development centers. Neighborhood associations and issue-based councils will be strengthened—and developed, where necessary—to further support community development initiatives while creating more opportunities for civic engagement and leadership development.



Vision. Inspired by the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative, a steering committee made up of leaders drawn from neighborhood associations and issue-based councils will be created to help make funding recommendations in the future. The purpose of the steering committee is for community leaders and residents to collaborate on finding common goals and realizing a unified vision for the community’s future. It is the steering committee that will make funding recommendations for the community.

Translating Community-Driven Research into Community-Driven Action

Project 1-2-6 is unique from many foundation-based initiatives in that it, alone, brings together all of the fundamental elements needed to effectively address community issues:

Community Research +

Community Engagement +

Financial Resources

Community-Driven Funding Recommendations

Since the community's needs and priorities change over time, it is important that the community takes part in constant dialogue. The Elmezzi Foundation will promote proactive volunteer networks, neighborhood associations, and issue-based councils to encourage a continual knowledge sharing. Drawn from these groups, a steering committee made up of committed community leaders will be created to make funding recommendations and see the long-term vision through to the end.

Building Partnerships with Public Funders

In addition to working with the community to facilitate the research and community engagement process, the Elmezzi Foundation will build partnerships with public and private funders. When the research is completed and the community agrees upon a unified vision, the Foundation will go on a presentation tour, pitching the results of the Project to potential funders with the goal of securing enough funding to make the vision a reality.

Thomas & Jeanne Elmezzi Foundation

Established in 1996, the Thomas & Jeanne Elmezzi Foundation is a private foundation that provides financial and technical support in three program areas: education, youth development, and community development.

In February 2008, the Board of Directors of the Elmezzi Foundation decided to focus a majority of its funding on promoting social and economic development in Long Island City/Astoria.

Long Island City/Astoria

Long Island City/Astoria bears a special significance to Thomas Elmezzi. Born and raised in Long Island City/Astoria, Thomas began his career in the neighborhood as a chemist, reformulating Pepsi in the 1930s and inventing Diet Pepsi and other well-known beverage products. Long Island City/Astoria is also the place where Tom met his wife Jeanne.

While Thomas was alive, he often voiced his wish to assist Long Island City/Astoria residents in need. Honoring that wish, the Foundation is committed to the Long Island City/Astoria neighborhood through the community development initiative Project 1•2•6.